

A Fulfilled Christian Life, Part 2 - Romans 12:2 – December 2nd, 2012

- Today's teaching will be part two of a series titled; "A Fulfilled Christian Life," and once again, we'll only take and tackle one verse today.
- If it seems that we're starting off by only doing one verse at a time, that's because we're starting off by only doing one verse at a time.
- Actually, we're sort of going to do even one word at a time, this because the first two verses at the least, are so packed, so full, of so much.

The JB Phillips translation captures the bigness of these first two verses this way, "With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give Him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to Him and acceptable by Him. Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God re-mold your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the Plan of God for you is good, meets all His demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity."

- By way of introduction, I'll include the first one, we found in verse one, as it relates to how we as Christians can live a joyful and fulfilled life.

1. By laying my life down for Him (Verse 1)

- v1 Paul says therefore in light of God's mercy to offer our bodies as living sacrifices holy and pleasing to God as our spiritual act of worship.

2. By renewing my mind in Him (Verse 2)

(2) Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

- v2 Paul says conform no longer to the worlds pattern. Be transformed by renewing of your mind to prove what God's perfect will is for you.
- In other words, instead of letting the world squeeze you into its mold, let God re-mold your mind according to his perfect will for your life.
- If you were to ask me what one of the most often asked questions that I get as a pastor was, it would have to be regarding the will of God.

- One of the best books that I've ever read on knowing God's will was written by a good friend, Strat Goodhue, whom many of you know.
- It's titled; "How to Know the Will of God" and is available on Amazon, and I'm pretty sure on Kindle as well, should you wish to get a copy.
- We're hoping to place an order for a number of books as a church, and when we do, if you're willing to wait, you can get one free of charge.

Of Romans 12:1-2, Strat writes; "The first two verses in Romans Chapter 12 have some tremendous insights into knowing the will of God. One of them is so simple that we can almost miss it as we read those two verses. A key to knowing God's will is being willing to do God's will. ...The Apostle Paul tells us that we should present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God. That's not how the sentence starts, however. It begins with, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God' or as another translation renders it, 'Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the Mercies of God.' ...What we believe about God determines how we behave toward God. ...If we want to experience that 'good and acceptable and perfect will of God,' commitment to God is the starting point."

- Question, wouldn't it stand to reason that God's perfect will for us is that we live a joy filled, and fulfilled Christian life in this fallen world.
- What mother or father doesn't want their children to be joyful, and fulfilled. How much more does our Heavenly Father want us joyful too?
- Would to God that we are numbered amongst those who are laying their lives down for the Lord, knowing it's the perfect will of the Lord.

- Notice how that Paul doesn't just say that I'll be able to know what God's will is, but that he also says I'll be able to prove what God's will is.
- Please know that this isn't a play on words in the sense that the Apostle Paul is saying the same thing in a different way, because he's not.
- The reason I say that is because it seems the Holy Spirit had inspired Paul to use the word "prove" by virtue of how it's a game changer.

- Let me explain, when I offer my body to the Lord, and renew my mind in the Lord, I will know and be able to prove it's the will of the Lord.
- By way of illustration, like the four legs of a table, so too are their four ways to know and prove God's will. The first leg is God's Word.
- The second leg is God's peace, the third leg is God's providence, and the fourth leg is godly counsel. All four will test it and prove it stands.

- It's at this juncture, that we will now round a corner and conduct a closer examination of the other words the Holy Spirit has Paul use.
- Let's take a look at two such words one of which is "conformed," and the other which is "transformed." First Paul's use of the word conform.
- When Paul says to no longer conform to the pattern of the world, what he's saying is don't be fashioned, or molded, into the worlds ways.

Charles Spurgeon - "Mark well that the only way to escape being conformed to the world is to be transformed. The customs of society will lead us away unless the grace of God rules in us with divine power. We are set to prove to the world what the mind of God is: may we have grace to accomplish our mission."

- He goes onto say that instead of being conformed, be transformed, which can be done vis-à-vis the Word of God renewing our minds.
- I suppose you could say that in a sense, it's like God's Word is washing my brain for me, instead of this fallen world brain washing me.
- Perhaps better said, the water of God's Word cleanses me, renews me, and transforms whereas the world dirties me, and conforms me.

- The scriptures are replete with the typology of God's Word being water that has the propensity to be cleansing to me, and renewing of me.

John 15:3 KJV Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

Ephesians 5:25-27 NIV Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her (26) to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, (27) and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

Exodus 30:17-21 NKJV Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: (18) "You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base also of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. And you shall put water in it, (19) for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it. (20) When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die. (21) So they shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die. And it shall be a statute forever to them—to him and his descendants throughout their generations."

VERSE	WATER IN THE BASIN	WATER OF GOD'S WORD
Verse 17	Moses isn't given size or dimension	We need to be continually cleansed
Verse 18	The laver was made from mirrors and bronze	The Word judges and reflects my condition
Verse 18	The empty basin is filled with water	I'm emptied of self and filled with Him
Verse 19	They wash hands & feet at it, not in it	The Word can't be dirtied it remains pure
Verse 20	They had to be clean to enter in to the Holy Place	Sin will keep me from entering into His presence
Verse 21	They're to be cleansed or they'll die	Sin's wage is death God's cleansing Word gives life
Verse 21	It was to be lasting it wasn't sealed	The Word of God has lasted and isn't to be closed

- By the way, let me parenthetically say, that the seven furnishings of the tabernacle were arranged in such a fashion as to picture the cross.
- This is where the word "transformed" comes into play because the word in the original language of the New Testament is metamorphosis.
- Both the cross of Christ, and the Word of Christ transform me from something inferior to something superior, like a caterpillar to a butterfly.

- What a striking contrast between the inferior Caterpillar, which crawls slow, and low to the earth, and the Butterfly flies high to the heavens.
- The bottom line is that the Word of God will determine whether my Christian life is more like the caterpillar, or if it's more like the Butterfly.
- The caterpillar Christian will live for the world, and be conformed by the world, because of their love of the world and the things in the world.

1 John 2:15-17 NIV Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (16) For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. (17) The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

- Conversely, the butterfly Christian, though he lives in the world, is not of the world, and as such, he lives for the world to come in heaven.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NIV (3) For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. (4) The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. (5) We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.